


A Journey to the Source of the Indau.

BY

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N August 2nd, 1891, in pursuance of instructions received from H. H. the Sultan of Johor, I left Johor Baharu on the Government Steamer *Pulai*, bound for Kuala Indau. One of the objects of the party of which I was in charge was to determine more exactly, if possible, the source of the Indau River.

Existing maps, notably that published under the auspices of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, show the Indau as a comparatively small river, having its source a little beyond Mount Janing, in Johor Territory, and emptying itself into the China Sea in Lat $2^{\circ} 40' 0''$ and Long. $103^{\circ} 36' 10''$.

In 1879, Mr. D. F. A. HERVEY explored the Indau Sembrong, a large tributary of the Indau proper, and afterwards published a most interesting account of his journey in the Journal of the Asiatic Society.

In 1875 VON MIKLUCHO MACLAY went up the Indau to Mount Janing, from thence, however, he appears to have turned seawards to Pekan.

Some few other Europeans have, I believe, penetrated as far as Mount Janing: beyond this point, however, nothing definite seems to have been known either of the course of the Indau, or the topography of the hill country where it takes its rise.

Owing to special work, which necessitated our calling at the Sedili Rivers, the *Pulai* did not arrive off Kuala Indau until August 11th.

On the North bank at the Kuala, there is a Police Station flying the Sultan of Pahang's flag, whilst on the opposite bank is Kampong Padang, the residence of the Sultan of Johor's *Naib*, or officer in charge. The coast just here is low and sandy, and a bar at the Kuala prevents steamers of any tonnage from entering the inner harbour. The village of Padang numbers about 500 Malay inhabitants, with a few Chinese merchants and shop-keepers. The trade with Singapore, which is small but growing, consists chiefly in the export of damar, rotans, getah and kapur barus (camphor wood).

On August 13th, I proceeded up-stream with a small party of Malays in *jalors* (dug-out canoes). For the first few miles the Indau averages $\frac{1}{3}$ of a mile in width, the banks are low and the country somewhat swampy. There are numerous small clearings on either bank, but very little cultivated land. Steamers of light draught can easily run up as far as Kuala Sembrong, a distance of 30 miles from Padang.

The junction of the Indau and Indau Sembrong was reached early on the morning of the 14th. Near this point is a small group of hills, the principal summits of which, are known as Bukit Tanah Abang and Bukit Langkap. The former hill is composed of granite, with, on the lower slopes, an overburden of white and yellow clays. Here I found a little cassiterite (tin ore) in small waterworn grains.

At the Station at Kuala Sembrong I obtained the assistance of the Malay *Batin* of Jakuns, and, accompanied by him, proceeded in a North-West direction along the Upper Indau to Batu Gajah, a Jakun village on the Johor bank, about 22 miles above the Sembrong. Here a camp was established, in order to enable the *Batin* to collect a sufficient number of aborigines to take myself and party up to the source. The river at this point is shallow and winding with a pebbly bed and high banks covered with fine timber.

But little is known of the Jakuns of the Upper Indau. They are in most cases darker and smaller than the ordinary Malay, and appear to present anthropological characteristics similar to those of the Orang Sakai described by MACLAY. A certain amount of crossing has probably rendered the Indau type

of aborigine less distinct, for instance, their hair does not curl so closely as that of the true Sakai and in some cases it is quite straight.

In the neighbourhood of Batu Gajah, about one hundred men, women and children live, three or four families sharing the same one-roomed hut. They subsist mainly on *ubi kayu* (tapioca root), fruits and fish, with a little rice which they obtain, together with salt and tobacco, from Malay traders, in exchange for rotan, damar, getah and camphor wood. I was informed by the *Batin* that during the greater portion of the year when dispersed in search of jungle products, these people live entirely on *ubi kayu* and fruit.

Most of the men carry long spears, but none of them appear to use the *sumpit* or blowpipe, which with its poisoned darts is so common amongst the aborigines of the Keratong and Jekati Rivers.

The increasing intercourse with the Malays is most strikingly exemplified in the dying out of the aboriginal tongue, which on the Indau has become a mere dialect, two-thirds at least of the words being apparently either Malay or of Malay origin. They have not yet, however, adopted the Mohamadan religion.

On the Sungei Mas, which flows from the West and enters the Indau about nine miles above Kuala Sembrong, is another Jakun settlement consisting of about 30 men with nearly 100 women and children; they cultivate a little paddy, but in other respects are similar to those previously described.

On arriving at Batu Gajah I had some difficulty in getting the Malay boatmen to camp on the river bank, as they assured me that there were many tigers in the neighbourhood. At first I paid no attention to this and was anything but impressed when a cry of *rimau ! rimau !!* roused everybody at midnight. The alarm proved a false one, having apparently originated in the fertile brain of a boatman who had supped recklessly on underdone *ubi kayu*.

Next day, however, two Jakuns were brought in very badly mauled by a tiger. They stated that they had been attacked whilst asleep on a sandbank some distance up the river; one

man's scalp wounds I judged to be of a fatal nature, the other, a youngster, was badly bitten in the forearm. They both refused to be treated by an European, and later in the day I saw them lying in the blazing sun with their wounds well smeared with wood ashes and wrapped in leaves. After this occurrence we found the tiger traps, consisting of a bamboo spear set across the paths, after the manner of a spring gun, a great deal more alarming than the idea of the tigers themselves, and that same evening a man was fatally wounded in the thigh by carelessly stepping across a trap of this kind.

I took advantage of the delay at Batu Gajah to ascend Gunong Janing. This mountain is situated on the left bank of the Indau, and is consequently in Johor territory. The ascent commences from the river bank and is at first fairly easy. The last few hundred feet, however, is as steep as it well can be without being absolutely perpendicular, and in many places the Jakuns had to build ladders of poles lashed with rotan.

The height of Janing, determined by aneroid barometer, is 1,950 feet. As far as I was enabled to judge, the mountain is largely if not entirely composed of a coarse whitish sandstone which crops out here and there in wall-like masses. The summit is densely wooded, and it was only by building a ladder to the top of a tall tree that a complete view of the surrounding country could be obtained.

Janing appears to be the chief of a small group of hills which rise on either bank of the Indau; Kendok, a long ridge-like hill, lies opposite Janing on the Pahang bank.

Away to the South on the verge of the horizon are the Belumut hills with the two chief summits—Gunong Belumut and Gunong Chemundong—distinctly visible.

To the North and North-East lies the jungle-covered plain of the Rumpin River, with the sea beyond, whilst to the North-West a confused mass of hills and mountains stretch away as far as the eye can reach, amongst these is the source of the Indau.

With a field glass I could make out the long spit of sand at Kuala Indau with Tiuman Island in the offing.

On August 21st, I left Batu Gajah and proceeded up-stream, accompanied by 4 Malays and 15 Jakuns in a dozen small *jalors*. Personal baggage and equipment was cut down to a very few pounds in order to enable us to carry sufficient rice to last a month at least. Mount Janing was soon left behind, and at noon on the same day the first *jeram*, or rapid, was reached. Progress now became very slow, as *jeram* followed *jeram* in rapid succession; at each of these the canoes had to be unloaded and dragged over the rocks, whilst the stores were carried along the shore or borne on the heads of the natives, who were at times breast deep in the water. Many of the *jerams* are really small waterfalls over which the river rushes with considerable force. Several times the canoes were torn from the hauling ropes of rotan, and swamped, and in one or two cases stove in, I believe, so that before the close of the first day of this sort of work, there was not a single package of stores that had not been under water at least two or three times. We had now entered a hilly country and the river became rockier and more winding every hour.

The geology of this region appears to be very simple.

A granite bed rock overlaid by a series of clays and clay shales, traversed by many dykes of quartz felsite, and quartz porphyry, with here and there irregularly intruded masses of felsite, diorite, trachyte and other felspathic rocks.

The *jerams* are in most cases formed by outcropping masses of quartz felsite, some few, however, are of granite and granite porphyry. Many of the hills are distinctly conical, notably Gunong Berumbun and Bukit Tenegon which rise abruptly from the Pahang bank.

From Mount Janing onwards the country on either side of the river, presents one mass of hilly uninhabited jungle.

On the afternoon of the 23rd, we reached the highest point navigable by small canoes. Here the Indau is simply a broad shallow stream heaped up with boulders of granite felsite and diorite, we, therefore, abandoned the boats and continued the journey on foot, cutting a path along the bank or more frequently wading in the bed of the stream; heavy loads and torrents of rain made matters somewhat trying for the next

few days. The hills now rapidly closed in on every side and the course of the stream lay in a narrow rocky ravine. At a point about 30 miles above Mount Janing, an old jungle path leads in a Westerly direction across the hills to the plain of Tenang, in the Segamat district, one long day's march for men without loads. Two days' journey towards the South-West brought us to the base of Gunong Besar and Gunong Chabang-tiga. At this point there is an extremely picturesque little waterfall, the stream falling over a mass of granite rocks nearly 40 feet high; here also are two huge boulders of granite which may serve future travellers as a landmark. Above the waterfall the Indau becomes a mere mountain rivulet with numerous tiny tributaries. The actual source is on the Eastern slope of a lofty ridge (1,800 feet above sea level) which connects Gunong Besar on the North with Gunong Chabang-tiga on the South. The formation here is a stiff yellow clay overlying the granitic country rock. On the Western slope of the ridge, or saddle back, is the source of the Segamat, which eventually empties itself into the Muar River. I spent several days in mapping this hill country, which does not appear to have been previously explored.

Gunong Besar is composed of a fine-grained grey granite traversed here and there by eruptive dykes and overlaid on the lower slopes with clays and clay shales. Height determined by aneroid 2,600 feet above sea level.

South of Gunong Besar and connected by the forementioned ridge is Chabang-tiga with its three granite peaks, the highest of which I estimate to be over 3,000 feet above sea level. To the North, East and South-East a small series of mountains stretch away to the horizon in one confused mass of jungle-covered peaks, ridges and chains. To the South-West lies the plain of Tenang, watered by the rivers Juassih, Tenang and Segamat, all tributaries of the Muar.

The range in which Gunong Besar and Gunong Chabang-tiga constitute the chief features, runs approximately North and South and is apparently separated from the hills to the far North and North-East by a flat tract of jungle country.

For topographical purposes, I have called this small system

of hills the Tenang range, the larger portion of which lies within the Johor frontier.

On September 1st, we crossed the Tenang Hills into Ulu Segamat, from this point my work took me northwards towards Keratong and the Jekati River. Five weeks later I returned to Johor Baharu by way of Muar and the West coast.

Itinerary from Kuala Sembrong to Ulu Indau.

I have compiled the following from my journal and sketch map in the hope that it may prove useful to future travellers.

The mileage given is, of course, only approximate, still I think that the error is well under 10%. I have not thought it necessary to give any of the more precise topographical data, as it would be of little value here unless accompanied by a map of Johor. In every case when the mileage is given, it refers to the distance above Kuala Sembrong and not Kuala Indau.

Mas River.—Left bank of Indau (ascending) at 8 miles above Kuala Sembrong; mouth about 50 feet wide; source in Johor Territory. Jakun village about 2 hours' journey up.

Lemakau River.—Left bank at 18 miles; mouth about 20 feet wide; source in Johor Territory.

Batu Gajah.—Jakun village on left bank at $22\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

Mount Janing.—On left bank at $24\frac{2}{3}$ miles; height 1,950 feet; path leads up South slope to summit. Kendok hills on right bank directly opposite, highest point navigable by large canoes.

Fasing River.—Left bank at 29 miles; source in the neighbourhood of Mount Janing; Kuala about 50 feet wide, very rocky.

The first *jeram* or rapid occurs here.

Bukit Tenegon.—A conical hill near the right bank.

Keng Kim River.—Right bank at $30\frac{1}{4}$ miles; source in low hills, one day's journey distant towards the Rumpin River.

Kanu Stream.—Left bank at $32\frac{3}{4}$ miles; Gunong Berumbun on right bank some little distance inland.

Temapan River.—Right bank at $34\frac{3}{4}$ miles; mouth about 45 feet broad, very rocky; source unknown.

Danoy River.—Left bank at $35\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

Lawing River.—Left bank at $36\frac{1}{4}$ miles.

Highest navigable point of Indau at $37\frac{1}{2}$ miles; river very rocky. Bukit Salokris on left bank; from the Jasing River to here there are 15 distinct series of rapids of granite and porphyry.

Kemupoy River.—Left bank at $38\frac{1}{4}$ miles; source in Bukit Batu Dandan; mouth about 40 feet wide, very shallow and rocky.

Kidir Stream.—Left bank at $40\frac{3}{4}$ miles; source probably in Batu Dandan.

Granite Rocks.—Right bank at $42\frac{2}{3}$ miles, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile further up a stream comes in from the S. E. (slopes of Chabang-tiga).

Source of Indau at $44\frac{2}{3}$ miles on a ridge about 2,800 feet above sea level.

The Tenang Hills.—The following are the chief features of this system.

The bearings and approximate distances are taken from the summit of Gunong Besar.

Gunong Besar.—Point of observation 2,500 feet high.

Bukit Salokris.—Bearing E. distance 5 miles from Gunong Besar.

Bukit Batu Dandan.—Bearing S. S. E. distance $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles, height 1,830 feet.

Gunong Selai.—Bearing South, distance 2 miles; source of Selai River a tributary of the Indau Sembrong.

Gunong Tiang.—Bearing South, distance 3 miles; height 2,230 feet.

Gunong Tenang.—Bearing South, distance $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles; source of the Tenang River, a tributary of the Muar.

Gunong Chabang-tiga.—Bearing S.S.W.,

distance $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles; 3 distinct peaks,
height about 3,000 feet.

Gunong Pukin.—Bearing N.N.W., distance
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles; source of Pukin River, a
tributary of the Keratong.

Length of the Upper Indau from the source to Kuala Sem-
brong, $44\frac{2}{3}$ miles, general course Easterly.

Length of the Indau from Kuala Sembrong to the sea, 30
miles, course Southerly.

Total length of river about 75 miles.